Gulf Gender Alliance

A Renaissance Chapter

The Flip Side

Vol. VII, No.7 — *Serving the Gulf Coast Transgender Community* — July2000

DIANE'S DIARY

Diane Tanner

We had a nice turnout for the June meeting with great board attendance with the notable exception of our missing Secretary-Treasurer. Of particular note was VP Crystal making her first meeting this year. Thanks to Nancy B and Karen for standing in as Treasurer and Secretary respectively. Due to her travels, we do have these occasions when someone must step into Cissy's shoes. It causes us to pause sometimes and reflect that it takes at least 3 people to properly fill those shoes, and we can appreciate the need for her special shoe connection (i.e. Shoe Express). We also welcomed visitors and our newest member Kathy to the meeting.

On a serious note, the passing of Lee Frances Heller is noted. She was a long time community supporter and provided spiritual inspiration to many.

I think we were able get the word out to most everyone that the presentation and Demo planned for June had to be postponed. We have confirmed things, and the July schedule is set. We will be having a demonstration on laser hair removal at our July meeting. Due to the demo set up, the normal "changing room" will not be available during meeting times. The extra room will definitely not be available after 6 pm, so we need everyone to try to make other arrangements for changing if necessary.

The Laser Demo/presentation will also include a discussion with a Baton Rouge area Cosmetic/Plastic Surgeon. This should be the biggest presentation GGA has ever coordinated for a meeting and should be of wide general interest for most members. I think it would be a particularly worthwhile event to attend. I want to encourage people to avoid the usual stay at home tendency, and make an effort to see the presentation. You've probably have had some questions about Laser hair removal - this is your chance to get some straight answers. JoAnn has done a wonderful job making the arrangements.

We are continuing to explore Baton Rouge meeting locations for August, and will finalize a yes or no at the July meeting. Regarding future events, anyone interested in being on the Pride committee (New Orleans Pride parade is September 30th and October 1st) contact Crystal or myself. As some may be aware, once again Pride falls on the same weekend as Southern Comfort.

On a closing note, I recently had an occasion to meet with some of the Renaissance Board of Directors including the Chair and Executive Director. It was a great meeting, and I came away with some real positive energy. As a Renaissance Chapter, I think there are a lot of ideas in the monthly Renaissance "Transgender Community News" that we can use to help keep our meetings interesting. Being part of that bigger network gives us some advantages I think we need to take better advantage of, and I encourage GGA members to also join Renaissance to see some of the things we can do here with a little more effort.

For The Record

Crystal Little

Hi Girlfriends!

Well what do you know, I finally made a meeting. It was really great to see so many old friends, and so many new faces. I had just about forgotten how to conduct myself at a meeting.

Michelle, it was a lot of fun to banter back and forth with you, just like old times.

For those of you that missed the meeting, I announced that contrary to the rumors and tales. Pride is up and running. There will be a "Pride Fest " this year. We will load up Armstrong Park up again this year, with all those lovely people in our communities. This years prides theme and motto is 'Bringing Us Together, Uniting to Remove the Barriers That Divide Us'. We are seeking participation from all the organizations in the area.

The New Orleans Gay and TG Community lost a champion on the 12th of June. Sonny Cleveland , former board member and two year co-chair of the New Orleans Alliance of Pride, President of the Gay Achievement Awards, and former board member

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of the Lesbian, Gay Community Center, and so many others, passed away after a lengthy fight with a mean cancer problem.

I first met Sonny at the Lambda Leadership Conference in 1995. This was my first outing into the community around us. At that time I was scared to death. But somehow I found myself talking with Sonny, and it was so easy. We were joking and talking like we had known each other for years. Maybe we had. But that was a quality that Sonny had.

As I became more involved with the community here in New Orleans, I found myself meeting up with Sonny often, and it was always a pleasurable experience.

I found myself serving on the Pride Board with him for three years. In that time we had many decisions and many long talks. Working together, as we were on the board, there were times that we tended to disagree, and we would have words. But this is as things should be. I think that both of us knew and understood that after the words and shouting were over with, we were still friends. We were both after the same goal. We found different roads to get there at times. I am saddened by his passing; he was a person I cared about and admired his drive, concern, and love for our communities. One of the best things that made our friendship and working relationship special, is that whenever I had something to say to him or about him, and he the same, it was done face to face. I will miss Sonny for many reasons, but the most important is the void that his passing leaves in our lives and in our community work.

I reckon that was my eulogy to a friend and co worker. And that takes up my space so I will close for now.

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LAGNIAPPE!

{This is your column! The articles submitted are generally from our readers. We will publish your pet peeves; yes!, even your positive comments if you happen to like something we've done. etc. It doesn't have to be more than a line or two, if long enough, we will normally publish it as a full article. It can be marked 'anonymous', but we do need to know who it was submitted by. It can even be a 'personal' as long as it fits our general policy as outlined in the bylaws and as summarized in our outreach brochure.-ed}

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Lee Frances Heller in Memoriam

Cissy G. Conley

How do you give credit to a life of godliness in a few short sentences? Melanie, president of Aurora/Central Mississippi said it this way:

How can I summarize a person's life of 81 years in a few moments? It's an impossible task, so I offer some brief reflections on the 'matron' of the Transgender Community in Mississippi.

Lee Frances continued her service to the community through 'Grace and Lace'. Always operating on a shoe-string budget, she never doubted the Lord was calling her to 'reach out' to others who were confused, distressed or rejected; often by others who profess to preach God's word!

She made plans to have 'Grace and Lace' continue to reach out to others, but also felt compelled to spread the 'Good News' through her 'LoveLetter'.

Most people would have stopped any activity after a stroke that left her heart working at only 25% of its normal capacity, but not Lee--she continued to share God's love with all her strength.

Lee was the 'mother' of the Transgendered Community! She never hesitated to listen to our hurts, to nurture us during our doubts and fears and always reminded us that we are 'gifted'!

Lee never tired of learning more about the Lord and his plans for her. She spoke many times of the joy she experienced in going to the classes to learn more about the Lord. She particularly enjoyed experiencing the love of a faith-filled community!

Lee, like us, had her faults--she could be stubborn and hard-headed- -like most of us! But, she was always gracious to us, generous to a fault, and consumed with the desire to bring God's peace and joy to everyone she met!

Lee will be sorely missed! We say our good bye to Lee today: not only a dear friend but also a real Christian who took seriously the Lord's command to spread the Good news to every person who would listen!

{I had the privilege of reading this at the service. Julie Johnson (IFGE Board) of Chicago, who had flown in to attend also gave a very emotional testimony to Lee and their friendship.}

A memorial service for Lee Frances was held in The Cathedral Church of St Andrew, Jackson MS on May 30th-- an Episcopal 'Burial of the Dead: Rite Two. Presiding were: Reverend Canon William T. Richter, Jr, Celebrant, Reverend Canon Susan Bock and Very Reverend Joseph O. Robinson. Approximately thirty were present, including many members of the transgendered community.

{Homily for Lee Francis Heller, by Susan Bock, May 30, 2000}

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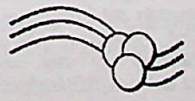
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The opinions or statements contained in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Gulf Gender Alliance. Contributions of articles and ads are welcomed, but may be altered in the editing process with the author's intent retained, or may be rejected, whether solicited or not. Absolutely no sexually explicit material will be accepted or printed. *Submissions of more than one page should be accompanied by an ASCII (or DOS text) file on 3.5" IBM/MS-DOS compatible diskette. (Word Perfect up through 9.0 also)*

The Gulf Gender Alliance is a non-profit support group for transgendered persons. Spouses and significant others are welcomed and are encouraged to participate. Also, members from related organizations, helping professionals, and approved guests are welcome when cleared through GGA's officers. *Dues are $25/year for active membership and $15/year for associate membership or newsletter only.*

We will exchange newsletters with any similar group. Groups that do not send a newsletter for 6 consecutive months may be dropped from the mailing list. Members who do not bring their dues current within 1 month of their expiration date may also be dropped at the board's discretion.

Our phone is: (504) 943-1999.

All Club correspondence should be sent to: **GGA**
P.O. Box 56836
New Orleans, LA 70156-6836

Submit articles and ads to:
Cissy G, Conley
P. O. Box 5085
Biloxi, MS 39534-0085

All advertisements and articles must be received by the Thursday following the second Saturday of the month. Otherwise, expect an additional months delay.

Comments noted with -ed or {ed} are from the Flip Side Staff and should not be construed as belonging to the author or any other source.

Our E-Mail address is: Info@GGA.org. Send news articles to TiaC@juno.com

GGA CALENDAR-2000

June 23rd-	Summer Safari
June 24th	Diva of the Night
Drag Ball $15----2300 Charteres	
(See Tara for reservations)	
July 4th	Laz House Benefit
July 8th-	Regular Meeting
July 24th	New Charlene's
August 12th-	Regular Meeting

{See members insert and stenopad column for more information on Regular Meeting locations & special events}

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:::::::Meeting Notice::::::::

If you wish to attend a GGA Meeting, please contact us at the aforementioned address or call us at:
(504) 943-1999

This month's regular meeting will be held July 10th in our usual location in the Greater New Orleans area. For those desiring to dress in the room, it is usually open by 3:30 - 4 p.m. Changing must be completed by 6:30 due to special program. Board of Directors meeting is at 6:00 p.m. and General Membership Meeting at 7:00 p.m. Meeting location information is included separately for members or guests who have been interviewed.

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Vice-president	*Crystal Little*
Secretary/Treasurer	*Cissy Conley*

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Diane T, Crystal L, Cissy C, Jo Ann Drusilla, Nancy B, Michelle Ryan & Shirley O.

"beyond the vale": whether we sit around the throne of God singing alleluias day and night, like the Revelation to John says. Or, if we feed the sheep all day, like a dying child once told me; Or if we watch old movies and catch up on all the reading we missed here. This would be my idea of Paradise! I'll leave it all to a loving God who can surely be trusted to work out the details for us.

I do know, for a fact, that one of the ways a person lives forever, is in our following her example and doing what she taught us to do. Here is some of what Lee Francis taught us before going on ahead of us to claim her final reward.

First, to be ourselves. To take up the very life and destiny, and use the particular gifts, God has given us. To live from the inside out, taking our cues from the Holy Spirit of God who richly dwells within each one of us.

Each of us is given as a gift to this world, and there is no higher calling than to be the person we are given and called to be. To speak our truth. To carry our cross. To let our light shine, no matter what the cost, because the promise beyond the cost is that we will hear God's own voice saying, "Well done, good and faithful friend of mine. Come now, and enter your rest."

Second, she taught us to reach out in love to all those on the margins, suffering in any way, and to bring them close, in to the heart of God. Lee was, herself, good news to the poor, the rejected, and the bound, and her words no less healing or prophetic than the words of Jesus when he said, "Blessed are you poor; blessed are you hungry; blessed are you mournful and you who are hated. For God is near to you in your very affliction, and promises to one day turn this world order right side up!

With Isaiah and Jesus, Lee Frances was no less than a prophet, who proclaimed that compassion is the highest order of human relationships, and God's deepest desire for them. Not judgement. Not fear. But compassion.

The community of Jesus Christ is not a gathering of those who best keep all the rules of religion. Rather it is a community of those who keep them, and those who try to make others keep them, and then, mostly, all the rest of us, who know ourselves to be sinful, weak, and poor, and that all we have to make us worthy to come inside is our belovedness in God. Lee reminded us of that all the time.

She taught us to keep growing, to keep stretching our hearts and minds so that we might come more and more into the full stature of love which was Christ's. Lee Francis maintained that delicate balance between taking a brave stand, and yet keeping her heart open and gentle towards new truth. She resisted organized religion right up to the end, whenever and wherever it was exclusive and hateful, even as she was becoming more deeply a part of it through her confirmation in the Christian community just days before her death.

Though her "outer nature was wasting away, her inner nature was, and is, being renewed every day. When we are confirmed, the bishop lays hands on our heads and asks that we daily increase in the Holy Spirit "more and more". This is her life, still.

In the passage from Isaiah, we read God's vision for how we will one day live together: It will be a feast for all people, with rich, fatty foods, well-aged wines, and God near enough to tenderly wipe away our very last tears!

Until that day, God gives us signs and reminders of the country of heaven. Lee Francis was such a sign and promise. A clear, true messenger of God's love for each of us. May we honor her and continue her life through our own courage to become the selves we are given to be, to speak the truth only we can say, to carry the cross only we can carry, to answer the call that only we can hear.

May we gather all God's people to God's heart through words and lives of compassion.

May we keep on growing all though this life which bumps right up to eternity, keeping our hearts supple and warm, so that God can stretch and shape and fill them with more and more love.

In her last E-mail to many of you, she wrote of her fall just outside the church on the day of her confirmation. "never have I laid in a street gutter. So I have now. From the gutter the Church looked beautiful with the morning sun shining on it highlighting a huge colorful banner of Christ which was hung on what would be the steeple.

I never knew the banner was there. I had never seen it as I don't look up when I'm in the car. Anyhow I immediately saw the Spiritual application and my own testimony personified. In the gutter I saw my Saviour, Jesus Christ. From the gutter to Christ. St. Andrew's can now say they picked up a poor old soul out of the gutter, brushed her off, took her in the Church where the Bishop of Mississippi confirmed her and a new Lee Frances was born!"

The testimony of our faith is that in the gutter, from the gutter, we see Jesus. From the tomb, we see the risen Christ, and we see ourselves rising with him. Alleluia!

Jock the Painter

"LION KING SIMBA"

<pagen767@hotmail.com>

There was a tradesman, a painter called Jock, who was very interested in making a pound where he could, so he often would thin down paint to make it go a wee bit further.

As it happened, he got away with this for some time, but eventually the Presbyterian Church decided to do a big restoration job on the roof of one of their biggest churches. Jock put in a bid, and because his price was so competitive, he got the job.

And so he set to, with a right good will, erecting the trestles and setting up the planks, and buying the paint and, yes, I am sorry to say, thinning it down with the turpentine.

Well, Jock was up on the scaffolding, painting away, the job nearly done when suddenly there was a horrendous clap of thunder, and the sky opened the rain poured down, washing the thin paint from all over the church and knocking Jock fair off the scaffold to land on the lawn, among the gravestones, surrounded by telltale puddles of the thinned and useless paint.

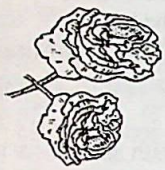
Jock was no fool. He knew this was a judgment from the Almighty, so he got on his knees and cried: "Oh, God! Forgive me! What should I do?"

And from the thunder, a mighty voice spoke: "Repaint! Repaint and thin no more!"

KAREN'S KORNER

Karen Louise Scott

Karen served as acting secretary at our June meeting. Her usual newsy, cheery column is combined into the 'From The Stenopad' below.



FROM THE STENOPAD

Karen Louise Scott

{I would like to thank Karen for taking over as secretary at the June meeting and Nancy B for serving as treasurer and providing additional information. Also Michelle Ryan for the background information on laser hair removal, found in a separate article immediately following this column. For those who asked about my sister BJ, she is doing quie well. She had a very successful vendor sales record at BeAll. And you all thought I was working! No, but that is why I will also miss the July meeting. I'll soon be competing with the other non-attenders for the record-Cissy}

There was quite a lot going on this month. People having a good time, bunches of plans and announcements.

Cissy asked me to take notes for her. I hope I did a good job. {An excellent job Karen; thank you very much.}

We voted one person in; Cathy and had a new person, Kim. Welcome to both and looking forward to seeing you both again soon. We were also glad to see several folks we hadn't seen much of lately; Crystal, Lori and Julie, Karla. DeeDee and Wendi.

Peggy, at Kathleen's Kloset has a good selection of larger sizes. If you are over in Gulfport, stop in and see her. Kathleen's Kloset is an advertiser in our newsletter.

On June 23rd, Summer Safari will be held at Café Brazil. Our own Noelle Fredericks and friends will be performing. Summer Safari is fun, so go and have a good time!

On July 4th, Laz Fest, a fund raiser for Lazarus House will be held.

On July 6, 8 and 11th, training will be conducted for the Hate Crimes Volunteers at the Lesbian and Gay Community Center (LGCC), 2114 Decatur Street. Applications for volunteers should be turned in by June 30th at the center. Applications are available at LGCC.

The House of Blues is opening a club within a club at their location. This club is called Resurrection ind proceeds go to GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network).

On July 24th, there will be a party at the new Charlene's on Blue Meadow Road in Bay St Louis. The theme is 'Pride on the Coast'. Proceeds go to breast cancer research.

It was announced that Harold Barillas, retail manager for MAC cosmetics at Dillards, Lakeside, will be available to do a presentation on makeup for drag artists. Harold's stage name is Sasha Taylor. We may get to see Harold/Sasha at the September meeting.

At our next meeting in July, there will be a lot of activity. We will finally have our laser hair removal demonstration. The bedroom, usually used for changing, will be used for the laser demo. If you need to change in the room, please plan on finishing before 6:30 p.m. There will also be plastic and cosmetic surgeon there to give a presentation. I hope everyone can be there. It should be quite an interesting meeting.

Volunteers are needed for the Pride Celebration and Parade Float. If interested, let the board know or contact Crystal, either by phone or e-mail.

We may be meeting in Baton Rouge in August We are still looking for a suitable room.

I am looking forrard to seeing everyonen next time. Have a good month.

{A few additional tidbits, thanks to Nancy B-ed}

June 23 Summer Safari $5.00 advance $7.00 at door June 23 Café Brazil on Frenchman St.

July 4 LazFest Lazarus House Benefit Free Food and Drink, Fun, Music, Silent Auction, $10.00 Admission Cabrini Park in the French Quarter 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM

July 12 LGCC Annual Elections and members meeting. Crystal is up for reelection.

Aug 30- Sep 2 Southern Decadence

Sep ?? No-Aids Task Force Walk

Sep Last weekend Pridefest NOLA

Fri: Dyke March

Sat: Parade (Start Washington Park) and Festival Armstrong Park

Sun: Festival at Armstrong Park

A reminder to all that items left behind are subject to auction, disposal or loss. Check around when you leave. Zelda had forgotten a wig (brand new & good) at the room as well as a compact and lipstick. I was able to reunite Zelda with the wig but the cosmetics are gone to that powder room in the sky.

July Meeting Board meet at 6:00 PM General meeting at 7:00 PM. Limited changing facilities. Cut off at about 6:30 when Baton Rouge folks will need to set up. Limited number of laser sun glasses.

Discussion about Pride and amount of money needed for float. Need to get a committee going. Pride table rental will be $50 more this year.

Laser Hair Removal

Michelle Ryan

A friend of mine sent me this info on lasers..... she's pretty up to date on the info and you can see from her letter. I thought you might would like to see this and maybe pass it on to anyone else that might be interested in taking a look at it. It provides some basic knowledge so that we might have some intelligent questions to ask at the meeting (not that anyone in our group asks dumb questions mind you !

Ruby lasers use a wavelength of 680 nanometers, Alexandrite is higher at 755 nm, and can be upped slightly by computer modulation to 800 nm. Then there's Yag lasers with a wavelength of 960 nm, and Diode which is as high as 1210 nm.

Basically, the longer the wavelength, the deeper into the skin the laser will penetrate. Diode is great for depth, however, the distance gauge cannot allow the spot to be any bigger than 4 mm to 8 mm in size. The Ruby lasers

are on average 8 mm in diameter with a rumor of a 9 mm spot size. Yag lasers are the same as Diode insofar as spot size. Alexandrites can be tweaked to above 18 mm diameter; for example the Candela Gentlelase Plus. The lasers can work very well provided you understand that the operator must know what he or she is doing because you must vary the depth every so often, sometimes during the very same session to achieve the best treatment.

Watch out for non-lasers such as Epilight which is NOT a true laser, but rather is an intensified flashlamp utilizing the *full* spectrum of light. Not too bad unless you consider the fact that the full spectrum of light includes UVA and UVB rays. Is it no wonder that the manufacturer of the Epilight changed the name of their "laser" and continued to sell it differently? Those who had Epilight machines were often stuck with a rapidly decreasing customer base due to the FDA's findings of long-term UVA/UVB exposure. These folks sold or transferred many of their Epilight leases to unsuspecting buyers eager to jump on the "laser bandwagon." Epilights have their place, but be careful.

The coolant used for the patient's skin is important, too. Candela uses two cryogen pulses to cool the skin just prior to pulsing the laser, and this is a dramatic breakthrough which decreases the shock to the upper dermal layers of the skin, thus reduced healing time, reduced swelling and redness, and reduced associated pain. Can you tell that I'm a huge fan of the Candela?

I'm the director at the laser college in Lakewood, Colorado, and I'm always being asked to try another brand of laser or other laser product. I try to keep on the cutting edge of technology insofar as this area is concerned, but things do get by me. Heck, I don't claim to know everything there is to know about hair removal. Oh, sorry, continuing...

Be careful of operators either too lazy to use a coolant or too inept to know which or how to apply the coolant. There are continual cool probes like that used on the 110v portable Palomar Lightsheer laser which uses a tweaked Alexandrite crystal to 800 nm wv. That's very good, and their computer program for the laser is really awesome, too.

Unfortunately, the several students we had their salesperson work on, turned out getting very, very red and being in pain for a long time afterward. Heck, one student actually lost skin after the guy pulsed his underarm because the skin stuck to the laser's probe/head. Go figure! Poor guy. We decided to keep it a while longer to allow our students to compare.

In the past 12 years of doing laser we've used 11 different types and brands of lasers. They're still out there, some are under different names so be careful. Candela's laser is the best so far that gives great results when used properly. It offers a nice balance between being skin friendly and pain friendly with effectiveness. Sorry if I sound like a rah-rah salesperson for Candela, I'm not. We don't sell lasers of any kind at the college or the clinic where I work most of the time.

There was a Diode laser I've seen which had an equally impressive setup as the Palomar, and it had great results, but the spot size was so small that it really failed to impress my patients due to a much longer time for a clearing. Yag lasers are usually worse in the spot size area that the Diode, but they are very effective as well, again when calibrated and set properly by a qualified technician.

Our clinic uses electrolysis every day and we will never drop it totally because lasers have their shortcomings, i.e. they have difficult working with McKinley skin types 5 and 6 (dark African American skin colors), and on those with hairs which are light reddish-orange (color is too similar to the laser's flash itself, thus the laser cannot see the hairs), and those folks with gray, white or silver hairs and some light blonde hairs because the laser simply cannot see the hairs (there's not enough pigmentation in the hair for the energy from the laser to be attracted to).

Hope this is of some benefit, Anita.

I'll post this for the rest of the group as well, in case they are still interested in laser-based hair removal. Oh, by the way, the FDA approved certain lasers for Permanent Hair Reduction about 1-1/2 months ago. I wish they would have had the other clinical studies in time to possibly reconsider their finding to show Permanent Hair Removal. Electrolysis achieved this many years ago, but it is under very different parameters insomuch as having that claim. Electrolysis wasn't always accepted, and it had it's rough years of standing for a mythical, unproven claim. Electrolysis is permanent by the FDA's standards from way back then, and that's great, but lasers have come a long way baby.

NATIONAL EVENTS

Events can be posted up to 1 year in advance. All events have been posted through national advertisement or direct contact from the promoter. GGA accepts no responsibility for the accuracy or content of these items.

SPICE VII

Houston, TX
July 12-16
A conference for s/o's
inovate1@flash.net

Kindred Spirits
8th Annual Soltice Circle
Black Mountain, NC
August 17th-20th
395 Lakey Gap Acres
Black Mountain, NC 28711
hollyfairy@juno.com
(828) 669-3889
www.TranSpirits.org

Southern Comfort
Atlanta, GA
26 Sep-1 Oct
P.O. Box 77591
Atlanta, GA 30357-1591
info@sccatl.org
www.sccatl.org
(404)633-6470

Renaissance 4th Intl Conf
Crossdressing, Sex & Gender
Oct 5th-8th
Philadelphia, PA
(610) 975-9119
www.ren.orgt/4thcongress

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Lee Brewster, 57

Proponent of Men Who Dress as Women

Penni Ashe Matz
penn45@ma.ultranet.com

Received from Angela Gardner <angela@ren.org>

Ms. Gardner reports that "I'm told Lee actually preferred to be "Mr." Lee Brewster. So using "he" is not inappropriate." My sincere thanks to everyone who sent in confirmations in response to my query in the last GAIN.

Lee G. Brewster, whose Greenwich Village boutique became a bazaar for transvestites from Avenue A to Abu Dhabi, died Friday in Manhattan. He was 57 and lived in Manhattan.

The cause was cancer, said Antoinette Scapinato, a friend and employee.

His 5,000-square-foot superstore in a loft at 400 West 14th Street, Lee's Mardi Gras Boutique, sells size 30 dresses and size 15 studded platform shoes to men who sometimes wish they were something else. "Lee's will turn you into the girl you've always wanted to be," New York magazine said last year.

Mr. Brewster sold racks of corsets, satin gloves and fishnet tights, but he was as interested in making a point as in making a profit. For years, he staged elaborate balls for cross-dressers, some homosexual and some heterosexual.

He financed a successful legal challenge to overturn a New York City ordinance that allowed people to be removed from public places for being gay.

Even in the years when many gays condemned public cross-dressing as unnecessarily provocative to the enemies of homosexuals, he urged men who felt like wearing boas to wear big feathery ones.

"I need to get their attention so they listen to me," he said, referring to the public. "I need to let them know that I'm there."

He made his own statement in white stiletto heels, form-fitting gowns, a silver--sequined maxi coat and lush false eyelashes, top and bottom. But he preferred to be called Mr. in the manner of old-time drag performers rather than using the female stage names now used by many transvestites.

Mr. Brewster, a quiet, round-faced man, was something of a freedom fighter for men who dress as women. "We're people enjoying life the only way we know how," he said.

Lee Greer Brewster was born in a log cabin in Honacker, Va., on April 27, 1943. He spent much of his youth in the hills of West Virginia, where his father was a coal miner. In the early 1960's, he worked as a file clerk for the Federal Bureau of Investigation until he was fired for being a homosexual, said Ms. Scapinato, who has worked in his boutique for 29 years.

So with $100 in his pocket he took off for Manhattan, where he became active in the Mattachine Society, a gay rights organization. He organized the society's drag balls and fund-raising events. Because some members disliked public cross--dressing, he began staging his own balls at the old Diplomat Hotel on West 43rd Street. The balls, held from 1969 to 1973, became so fashionable that the real Jacqueline Susann, Carol Channing and Shirley MacLaine attended the last one.

On Oct. 31, 1969, Mr. Brewster announced at one of the balls that he would start his clothing business, which he described as the first one devoted to cross--dressers.

Mr. Brewster's shop prospered before movies like "Mrs. Doubtfire" and "La Cage aux Folles" seemed to make drag almost mainstream, and opening it was a bold step in 1969.

At first he took only mail orders, but soon so many people were knocking on the door of his Hell's Kitchen apartment that he opened a store around the corner. It moved several times, but was never on the ground floor.

"He wanted people to have to find him," Ms. Scapinato said. "He tried to protect his customer base."

Some customers, including Lady Bunny, the founder of Wigstock, the cross-dressing festival held every Labor Day in Greenwich Village -- as well as the costume designers for "Tootsie," "The Birdcage" and "To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar" -- do not mind being seen in the store. But others are touchier.

"Half of my clients are respectable-looking businessmen," Mr. Brewster said in an interview in The Village Voice, "very normal, but they know better than to present that side of themselves."

Mr. Brewster also founded a civil rights organization called Queens Liberation Army and in the 1970's and 80's, published Drag Magazine. In the early 1970's, he helped persuade the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs to delete homosexuals from a list of people who could be removed from any public place. Though it was seldom enforced, he felt the regulation gave the police the legal authority to harass gays if they chose.

Mr. Brewster is survived by his sister, June, and two brothers, James and Ted, all of whom live in the Baltimore area, and another brother, Sam, who lives in Dayton, Ohio.

"For want of a better phrase," Ms. Scapinato said, "he was really the mother to us all."

{I had the privilege of meeting Lee on three of the Mardi Gras tours that were conducted in New Orleans in['74, '75 and '76. I was told later they were discontinued because the French Quarter was not as safe for TG's as in the earlier years. Lee had a natural feminine voice.-ed}

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Bush's Promise to Gays and Lesbians Proves Hollow

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Texas Republicans Shut Out Gay Republicans from State Convention Democratic National Committee.

For Immediate Release May 26, 2000

Bush fails on promises to Gays, Dis's TGs

Washington, D.C. - After George W. Bush said he would "welcome" gays and lesbians into his campaign last month, Bush's home state party yesterday shut the Texas Log Cabin Republicans out of the state convention. The group represents 1,000 gay and lesbian Republicans. [Dallas Morning News, 5/26/00]

Democratic National Committee (DNC) National Chair Joe Andrew today challenged Bush to live up to his promise. "I call on George W. Bush to tell his fellow Texans to end the long-standing discrimination of gays and lesbians, to allow all voices to be heard at their convention," said Andrew. "It is utterly hypocritical for Bush to preach 'inclusion' on one hand and then to allow this on-going and hateful exclusion of gays and lesbians in Texas on the other." In 1998, the Texas Republican convention denied Log Cabin Republicans a booth at the convention hall.

Texas Republican party spokesman Robert Black said, "We don't allow pedophiles, transvestites or cross-dressers, either." Bush made it clear behind the scenes that he approved of the decision, according to conservative columnist Robert Novak. Bush made no comment at all after the group's request for a booth at the 1996 convention was denied. [Novak column, State Journal Register, 6/21/98; New York Post, 6/21/98; New York Times, 6/30/98; Houston Chronicle, 5/26/96; Austin American-Statesman, 6/6/98]

Andrew added, "Through our official DNC Gay and Lesbian Caucus, we will make sure that all Americans are heard at our national convention. Given the hollow platitudes and intolerant, extremist rhetoric of the Republican Party, I doubt they will do the same. To use Bush's words, we urge Republicans and Bush to 'judge people based on their heart and soul.'"

George W. Bush's Record of Exclusion: George W. Bush Opposes Employment Protections for Gay and Lesbian Americans. George W. Bush has refused to endorse the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). As governor, Bush refused to adopt an administration non-discrimination policy including sexual orientation. On Project Vote Smart's 1998 gubernatorial candidate questionnaire, Bush answered "No" to the question, "Do you believe that the Texas government should include sexual orientation in Texas' anti--discrimination laws?" ["1998 Texas Gubernatorial National Political Awareness Test," Project Vote Smart, www.vote-smart.org].

George W. Bush Opposes Hate Crimes Protections Covering Sexual Orientation. As governor of Texas, George W. Bush opposed provisions in the James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Act, a bill that would have mandated stiffer penalties for cases in which victims of violence are targeted because of their race, gender, or sexual orientation. [The Advocate, 6/22/99; National Public Radio, 5/18/99]

George W. Bush Has Failed in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS. A Los Angeles Times op-ed noted that Bush "has never publicly said the word AIDS after five years in office.... the entire AIDS - not to mention gay and lesbian - organizational infrastructure is war-weary and alarmed that Bush has not addressed AIDS publicly as a social, policy or health issue in his 60 months as governor." [Rothman op-ed, Los Angeles Times, 12/6/99]

George W. Bush Is Vague on Appointing Qualified Gays and Lesbians. Bush has waffled about whether any open gays and lesbians may serve in his Administration. He initially said he would appoint gays "as long as their political agenda was the same as mine," but later confided to a private meeting with the Madison Project, a right--wing conservative group, that "he would not appoint anyone who is known to be gay" to a federal post. [Time, 2/28/00; St. Petersburg Times, 4/11/99; Fort Worth Star Telegram, 3/22/99]

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The Transgender Fund

Diane Dale

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Penni Ashe Matz

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A new era in the development of the transgender community is being heralded. The Transgender Fund has been established as an independent, national foundation. It has at the heart of its mission the support of substantive programs that benefit every member of every segment of the transgender community. Particular attention will be placed upon collaborative initiatives among human rights, education, and local support organizations. The Fund's Board of Trustees represents a cross-section of the community's diverse constituencies.

Whether one is Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, a Crossdresser, Transsexual, Intersexed, or simply a person who cares about those whose lives have been compromised just because of the way they have chosen to express who they are as human beings, The Transgender Fund is with them.

For more information about the fund and how to be an important part of its growth and development, visit its website at WWW-.TGFUND.ORG; or write for a brochure: The Transgender Fund, PO Box 2132, Southeastern, PA 19399.

Phone: 610-651-9111

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Was Miss Perfect a Mister at Birth?

Penni Ashe Matz

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[Received from Brenda Lana Smith

<Brenda-Lana@blsmith.freeserve.co.uk>]

"Dear Jane"

(You can e-mail her at:

dear.jane@news-of-the-world.co.uk)

THE woman I've just met is wonderful.

We have so much In common and I desperately want a relationship with her. But the trouble Is I've been told she was once a man and has had a sex change. How can I find out without causing embarrassment to both of us?

JANE SAYS: So what if she was a man? It could be malicious speculation - but if she has had a sex change then she is a woman. If your relationship progresses to sex and all IS well, don't worry. Accept her as she IS.

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Some Republicans are Better Than Barney Frank

Phyllis R. Frye, Esq

Washington Blade, June 9 'A Republican'

Rarely do I write in praise of any republican. Any gay, bisexual, or trans-gendered person who is even considering voting for George W. Bush this year is in dire need of mental counseling.

Having said that, I feel the need to write an addendum to the credit given, in the Blade's May 26 article on retiring State Sen. Alan Spear, to former Minnesota Governor Arne Carlson regarding the enactment of the transgender-inclusive 1993 Minnesota Human Rights Act. Carlson not only was the governor who signed the act but, as a state representative 18 years earlier during one of the first efforts to pass anti-discrimination legislation (and at the behest of transsexual rights activists), he first introduced the language that is now part of Minnesota's definition of "sexual orientation." This language, "having or being perceived as having a self-image or identity not traditionally associated with one's biological maleness or femaleness," makes Minnesota unique among the states that have sexual orientation employment anti--discrimination laws.

Transgender rights advocates keep being told by those who oppose transgender inclusion in the proposed federal Employment Non Discrimination Act that once sexual orientation is covered, then gender identity will follow. Of all the state anti-discrimination laws that started out non-transgender--inclusive, none have seen transgender inclusion follow (although it has happened with a few city ordinances; and, among states, California is making an earnest effort this year.)

Democrat as I am, liberal as I am, if it came down to a choice in any contest between Republican Arne Carlson and Democratic U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (Mass.), Carlson would get my vote.

Katrina Rose (texkatrina@aol.com)

St. Paul, Minn.

Karen Kerin Announces

Penni Ashe Matz

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Tina M. Wood <ac245@osfn.org

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) -

Calling civil unions "an apartheid system" and decrying what she said was an intrusive tax structure, Karen Kerin launched a long-shot bid for the Republican nomination to challenge incumbent U.S. Congressman Bernie Sanders.

Speaking before about a dozen people at Vermont Law School Saturday, Kerin, 56, criticized what she called the "mother may I" syndrome which she said is weakening the U.S.

"Gradually creeping into all this nation's successes has been an insidious infection that has brought down every great other leading nation on the world stage," she said.

Kerin, a 1997 graduate of Vermont Law School and resident of South Royalton, drew on themes that sounded alternately Democratic and Republican.

She said she opposes gun control, the income tax and normalized trading relations with China. She also favors campaign finance reform, reducing tax exemptions for non-profit organizations, and the creation of a petroleum reserve in the Northeast.

She also supports making classes in geography, history and government mandatory for all high school students.

``We must stop mortgaging the future of our children and grandchildren and we must honor our commitments to our senior citizens,'' Kerin said.

On recently passed civil unions law, she said the Legislature has created a ``separate but equal'' system for same-sex couples. She said the state should not at all license marriages, instead simply record marriages between all couples that would be performed only in churches.

Even though no other candidates have come forth to challenge Sanders, who is running for a sixth term as Vermont's sole congressman, the Republican party has so far reacted coolly to Kerin's intention to gain the GOP nomination.

In an earlier interview with The Burlington Free Press, Kerin also acknowledged questions about her sexual identity. She said she was born Charles Kerin, but later legally changed her name, and her gender, to Karin Kerin.

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{Some of us met Karen Kerin at the Law Conferences-ed}

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